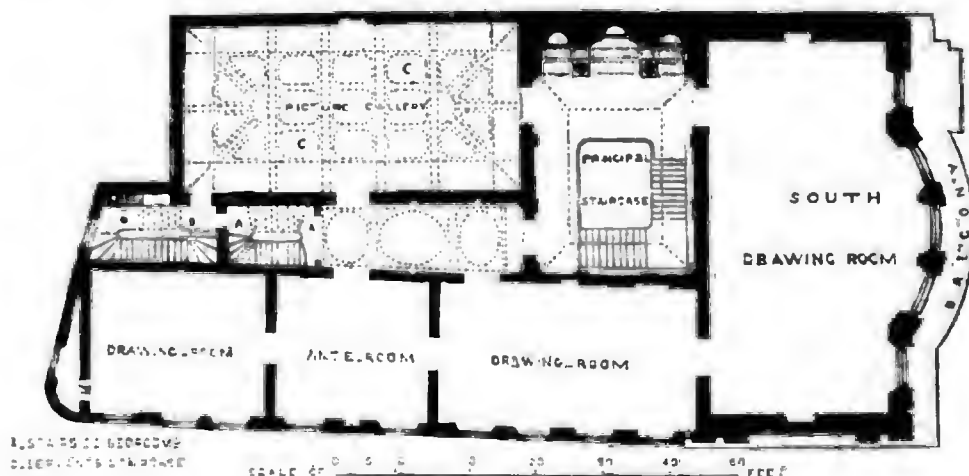


PLAN OF HERTFORD HOUSE, PICCADILLY.



a kind of rough-faced ashlar, the stones averaging about 12 inches in thickness, and from 15 to 18 inches on the bed, backed with a beating of rubble masonry. The average cost of this kind of masonry, which required great care in the execution, was about 21s. per cubic yard. The other viaduct was over the river Medlock, near Manchester, and differed from either of the others, inasmuch as the piers were composed entirely of ashlar, laid header and stretcher alternately, without any rubble filling, or beating. The spaces between the external walls were left vacant; but, as each header extended completely across the breadth of the pier, and the courses of masonry were alternated, the spaces were not continuous, as in the Hall Bottom Viaduct. The cubic contents of masonry in this work were proportionally much less than in either of the others, but the cost was greater, being at the rate of 2l. 5s. 6d. per cubic yard.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ARCHITECTS IN COMPETITIONS.

THE last number of THE BUILDER but one contained two very magnanimous offers to competing architects. Fifteen guineas (for a complete design, &c.) for a chapel and school rooms, and five pounds (for do.) for a union workhouse. These are certainly very modest specimens of provincial generosity. When these stupendous offers were determined upon, who can portray the various emotions which agitated the bosoms of the art-encouraging individuals concerned, at the thought of having won for themselves a niche in the temple of fame,—of the probability of their being handed down to posterity as benefactors of the age in which they lived, especially in the department of the fine arts, and that of architecture in particular. How extended and enlarged must be their ideas of our duties and responsibilities. What comprehensive views these benighted men must entertain of the value of an architect's time, and the compensation he deserves for the wear and tear of his brain by intense thought and study. I verily believe this class of individuals think that it is (or it ought to be) as easy for architects to produce original designs as it is for them to supply their customers with bacon, hoots, or breeches. They do not appear to possess one rational idea upon the subject. I am at a loss to conceive on what principle they estimate their so-called "remuneration." For my part I should as soon think of competing for a fifteen or five shilling premium as for that which they offer. And yet, sir, these are the men that chatter loudest about the degeneracy of modern design, and the want of skill in modern workmen. Ask these Wintonians if they imagine the designs for their cathedral to have been evolved by

such art-producing premiums. Tell them there is at least one young architect that sooner than put a pencil to paper on such soul and body destroying terms, would take the tools of a carpenter, mason, or bricklayer, and work for a guinea a week, rather than degrade the profession to which he belongs by competing on such terms. It is time the profession knew the amount of respect due to themselves, if others do not; and I do hope that all such offers as these will universally meet with the contempt they deserve. W. B.

I SEE advertised in your paper that the Bostonians are determined to do what has so long been required, to re-seat, in fact to re-arrange, the whole interior of their church. Now, I happen to be very well acquainted with what is going on, business frequently requiring my attendance in that neighbourhood. I am desirous of being a competitor notwithstanding their panper-like premium, but must first be assured that fair play is meant, and should only be assured of this under existing circumstances by some competent and disinterested architect unacquainted with either motto or name, being appointed to decide.

I should like to see competitors themselves set about reclaiming the almost lost respectability of our profession, placing it far beyond the range of possibility to be insulted by the wretched inducements your advertisements frequently set forth. Is it not a reflection upon us that we do not combine to put down this growing evil, and erect a standard where intelligence, industry, and honesty can meet with its just reward, without any regard to personal influence? ONE IN THE FIELD.

St. George's Hall, Bradford Competition.—As it is only by repeated exposure of all unfairness in the decision of competitions, that architects can hope to put a stop to the gross injustice they are, in nine cases out of ten, subjected to, I venture to trouble you with the following remarks on the conduct of the committee who decided the late Bradford competition. Having made careful inquiries on the subject, and been in communication with several of the leading professionals in that neighbourhood, I feel certain that my information is correct. Your former correspondent on the subject, "A Lover of Fair Play," gave sufficient account of the time spent in careful examination of the designs, and of the method by which the decision was arrived at. He alludes, also, to a report current in the town many days before the designs were sent in, that one or two gentlemen of the committee were more frequently in communication with the heretofore to be successful competitor than was proper or necessary. This report, whether well-founded or not, obtained such general credence that, with the

exception of two, the local architects did not send in designs. Still more deserves reprobation, the utter disregard paid to the most important item of their instructions to architects, i. e. the cost. The design selected for execution will, in the opinion of competent judges who have since examined the drawings, if carried out in its present form, cost at least one-half more than the stipulated sum. The second premiated design, described in a local paper as of a "highly ornate style, enriched to a remarkable degree," would, if built, cost some thousands more than even the selected one, and is confessedly wanting in the required accommodation. How, in the name of honesty, can gentlemen of the committee act so unjustly as to give the premiums to designs which, according to their own instructions, were inadmissible? It states, after mentioning that the amount to be expended was increased to 10,000l., "The directors wish it to be distinctly understood that no design will be admitted to competition which, in the opinion of the directors, and of such authority as they may call in to advise them, will, in the execution and completion thereof, exceed the last-mentioned sum."

Now, the directors and their advisers must be profoundly ignorant of such matters, if they for a moment suppose the two selected designs complied with the instruction as to cost: indeed, the author of the second design, I am informed, does not profess to have adhered to instructions on that head; and they must have been ill qualified for their task, if it never struck them that an extra 5,000l. expense would readily account for "marked superiority." Of course, the St. George's Hall Company have a perfect right to incur any amount of expense they think proper, but it is not equally clear that the committee are justified in violating the most essential of the conditions they themselves imposed. It is a strange anomaly that highly respectable men, of great talent and business acquirements, will, when upon a committee, often commit acts which, as private individuals, they would be thoroughly ashamed of. Would that some philosopher would enter into an inquiry of the subject, and give an explanation of this remarkable but disgraceful fact, such as would enable all lovers of fair play to know "when to seek and when avoid."

A COMPETITOR WHO ABIDED BY THE INSTRUCTIONS.

SMITHFIELD.—On the 9th instant the City Corporation Bill for the enlargement of Smithfield market was thrown out, on a motion for the second reading, by a large majority. On the same evening the Government's Smithfield Market Removal Bill was read a second time by a still greater majority. The latter Bill was then referred to a select committee.